

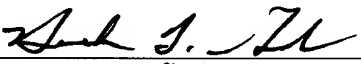
IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re:  
U.S. Application of: Akira TSUBOUCHI, Kiyoshi OKUBO and Yasushi  
WATANABE  
For: HOLLOW RACK SHAFT AND  
MANUFACTURING METHOD THEREOF  
Confirmation No.: 8523  
U.S. Serial No.: 09/994,526  
Filed: November 27, 2001  
Group Art Unit: 3683  
Examiner: Devon C. Kramer

**MAIL STOP RCE**

Commissioner for Patents  
P. O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Sir:

EXPRESS MAIL MAILING LABEL NO. EV 411784129 US
DATE OF DEPOSIT: FEBRUARY 16, 2004
I hereby certify that this paper or fee is being deposited with the United States Postal Service "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee" service under 37 C.F.R. § 1.10 on the date indicated above and is addressed to MAIL STOP RCE, Commissioner For Patents, P. O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.
<b>Derrick T. Gordon</b>
Name of Person Mailing Paper or Fee

Signature
<b>FEBRUARY 16, 2004</b>
Date of Signature

**REQUEST FOR CONTINUED EXAMINATION (RCE)**  
**PURSUANT TO 37 C.F.R. § 1.114**

This is a Request for Continued Examination (RCE), of Application Serial No. 09/994,526, filed on November 27, 2001, by Akira TSUBOUCHI, Kiyoshi OKUBO and Yasushi WATANABE, entitled HOLLOW RACK SHAFT AND MANUFACTURING METHOD THEREOF.

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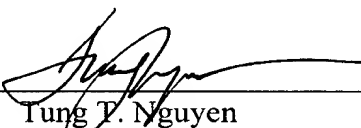
A Preliminary Amendment is being filed concurrently herewith.

A Petition for One-Month Extension of Time is being filed concurrently herewith.

A Response Transmittal and Fee Authorization form authorizing the amount of \$880.00 (\$770.00 for the filing fee for a Request for Continued Examination (RCE), and the one month extension fee of \$110.00 under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17(a)(1)), to be charged to Sidley Austin Brown & Wood LLP's Deposit Account No. 18-1260 is enclosed herewith in duplicate. However, if the Response Transmittal and Fee Authorization form is missing, insufficient, or otherwise inadequate, or if a fee, other than the issue fee, is required during the pendency of this application, please charge such fee to Sidley Austin Brown & Wood LLP's Deposit Account No. 18-1260. Please credit any overpayment to Sidley Austin Brown & Wood LLP's Deposit Account No. 18-1260.

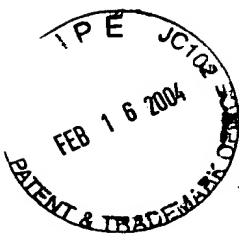
Respectfully submitted,

By: \_\_\_\_\_

  
Tung T. Nguyen  
Registration No. 42,935  
Attorney for Applicants

TTN/llb  
SIDLEY AUSTIN BROWN & WOOD LLP  
717 North Harwood  
Suite 3400  
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February 16, 2004

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE



Application No.: 09/994,526  
Applicant(s): Akira TSUBOUCHI, Kiyoshi OKUBO and Yasushi  
WATANABE  
For: HOLLOW RACK SHAFT AND MANUFACTURING  
METHOD THEREOF  
Confirmation No.: 8523  
Customer No.: 24731  
Docket No.: 18733/00070  
Filed: November 27, 2001  
Group Art Unit: 3683  
Examiner: Devon C. Kramer

**MAIL STOP RCE**

Commissioner for Patents  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

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Derrick T. Gordon

Name of Person Mailing Paper or Fee

Signature

FEBRUARY 16, 2004

Date of Signature

**PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT**

The following is a preliminary amendment, which is being submitted concurrently  
with the filing of a Request for Continued Examination.

A Petition for Extension of Time, to extend the response period for the Office  
Action, dated October 16, 2003, for one additional month to February 16, 2004, is being  
filed concurrently.

Application No. 09/994,526  
Preliminary Amendment dated February 16, 2004  
Reply to Office Action of October 16, 2003

**Amendments to the Claims** are reflected in the listing of claims which begins on page 3 of this paper.

**Amendments to the Drawings** begin on page 5 of this paper.

**Remarks** begin on page 6 of this paper.

Please amend the above-identified application as follows: